

Reflections on Perseverance with Lift

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While working with [Lift Louisiana](#), I've definitely learned the value of perseverance when working on long projects. I spent the better part of the semester—with sprinklings of other assignments, projects, and obligations—working on legislator profiles. Although the assignment was tedious at times and required an enormous amount of attention to detail, it was definitely an incredible awarding project. As I glance through the hundreds of legislator profiles I created for state representatives and senators from seven major Louisiana parishes on sexual education, abortion, and economic justice bills, the pay-off feels incredible. Not just because they're

finally finished after countless hours of bill searches, formatting crises, and color-coding, but because of their distinct usefulness.

As a political science major, conversations on abysmal voter turnout dominate many of my courses. The numbers prove truly sobering — nationally, 61.4% of eligible, registered voters (not including non-registered adults, undocumented folks, and people who face political disenfranchisement) turned out to the polls in 2016. This was a record high, going up by more than five percent since the last national election. In Louisiana, however, a sobering 14.27% of registered, eligible voters actually voted in 2017. For local, parish-based elections, this number rarely is any higher (with most voter turnout rates hovering between 8% and 15%).

Of that small sub-section of eligible voters who even vote, the number who make politically informed decisions likely proves even lower. Due to busy schedules; the lack of accessibility of political information; and the role of media coverage in shaping our perception of candidates and legislation, the average voter rarely spends a great deal of time combing through all of this information. And even for folks who have the privilege of time, energy, and political knowledge to go through all of this information and make their own decisions about policies and politicians, the sheer amount of proposed bills and policies that occur on local, state, and national levels makes this even harder.

So, while these legislator profiles took hours to complete and possibly more emotional than physical energy to get through, I see their worth very vividly. They provide community members and registered voters with an easy, one-page, digestible piece of information about the voting histories of current Louisiana legislators. Not only do they provide all of the information that took dozens of bill searches to find in one place, but they allow voters to make their own, informed decisions about candidates based on the candidates' own voting decisions over the course of the last three (almost four years). And that—despite the tediousness—makes it all worth it to me. Especially since I got the opportunity to learn a TON of information about Louisiana legislators!